

TERROR



NO. 30
MAY - JULY

TALES



10¢

FROM THE

CRYPT

FEATURING



THE CRYPT-KEEPER



THE VAULT-KEEPER



THE OLD WITCH



THE CRYPT OF TERROR

HEN, HEH! BACK AGAIN, EN? BACK FOR MORE CHILLS AND SHIVERS! WELL, COME IN! COME INTO THE CRYPT OF TERROR AND I'LL DOLE YOU OUT YOUR SHARE! YEP! IT'S ME, THE CRYPT-KEEPER, YOUR HOST IN HORROR! JUST SIT YOURSELF DOWN ON THAT FOUL-SMELLING, EARTHENWARE URN OVER THERE, AND I'LL ENTERTAIN YOU! WHAT'S IN THE URN? OH, THAT'S WHAT'S LEFT OF WHITEY WHITTAKER! WHO'S HE? WELL, YOU JUST SETTLE DOWN AND I'LL LET YOU HEAR WHITEY'S STORY IN HIS VERY OWN WORDS! READY? WHITEY CALLS THIS GADAVEROUS CREATION...

GAS-TLY PROSPECTS!



JEFF WHITTAKER'S MY HANDLE! THOUGH SOME OF THE BOYS FROM THE WAGON TRAIN I'D JOINED UP WITH TO COME WEST TO CALIFORNIA HAD NICKNAMED ME 'WHITEY'! THAT'S 'CAUSE I WAS NO CHICKEN, AND MY HAIR'D TURNED GRAY-WHITE LONG YEARS BEFORE! BUT I'D BEEN A PROSPECTIN' FOOL ALL M' LIFE, AN' WHEN THEY FOUND THE YELLER STUFF OVER AT SUTTER'S SAW MILL IN 1848, I PACKED MY DUDS AN' HEADED WEST WITH THE REST OF THE FORTY-NINERS...

WAL, WHITEY! WE'LL BE IN CALIFORNIA BY THIS TIME NEXT WEEK! WHAT'S YOUR PLANS?

ME? I'M HEADIN' RIGHT FER THEM GOLD FIELDS! GONNA STAKE ME OUT A CLAIM AND PAH ME A FORTUNE!



YEP! THEM WERE MY PLANS! I HAD LOTS O' HIGH HOPES IN THEM DAYS! SOON AS WE HIT SACRAMENTO, I LIT OUT UP THE VALLEY.

KEEP GOIN', STRANGER! TRY THIS LAND'S ALL STAKED OUT!

TEN MILES FURTHER UP-RIVER!



DIDN'T TAKE ME LONG T' FIND OUT THAT MOST O' THE GOLD'D BEEN PLAYED OUT BY THE TIME THAT I GOT THERE! YELLER-HUNGRY CRITTERS'D TAKEN CLIPPER SHIPS 'ROUND THE CAPE O' GOOD HOPE AN' BEATEN US OVERLANDERS TO THE FIELDS...

THIS STREAM'S BEEN PANNED OUT ALREADY!



FINALLY I DECIDED TO TRY UP IN THE HILLS! I'D HEARD TALK ABOUT RICH VEINS BEIN' FOUND! I BOUGHT ME A SHOTGUN SO'S I COULD HUNT MY OWN VITTLES, A PICK-AXE AN' A SHOVEL T' DIG WITH, AN' SOME CANNED BEANS! SPENT EVERY LAST DIME I OWNED...

BETTER TAKE S'MORE SHELLS, STRANGER! GOTTA WATCH OUT FOR CLAIM JUMPERS UP IN THE HILLS!

OH! THAT SO?



LE'ME TELL YOU, THAT'S BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY, THEM CALIFORNIA HILLS! TOWERIN' PINES WHISPERIN' OVERHEAD! RUSHIN' STREAMS CASCADIN' OVER ROCKS! QUIET LAKES LAYIN' LIKE LOOKIN'-GLASSES! I PITCHED ME A TENT NEXT TO ONE OF THEM QUIET LAKES AND MADE ME A CAMP...

THIS SHOR IS PURTY, BUT IT AIN'T GETTIN' ME RICH! T'MORROW, I START DIGGIN'!



I TRIED A FEW SPOTS WITHOUT MUCH SUCCESS! THEN I FOUND ME A STREAM FEEDIN' INTO THE LAKE! SHE WAS A FAST-RUNNIN' STREAM... A-COMIN' DOWN FROM THEN HILLS AND A-BUGGIN' OUT INTO THE QUIET LAKE... STIRRIN' IT ALL UP 'ROUND THE SPOT...

WHUT'S THAT? SOMETHIN' SHININ' IN THE WATER!



IT WERE GOLD ALL RIGHT! AND LORDY, WHAT A RICH DEPOSIT! THAT THERE STREAM MUSTA BEEN ROLLIN' THEM NUGGETS DOWN FROM THE HILLS SINCE TIME BEGUN... AN' THEY WERE ALL LAYIN' RIGHT THERE FER ME...

IT'LL TAKE ME A YEAR TO GLEAN OUT THIS STRIKE! I'M RICH! RICH!



SO I STARTED PANNIN'! I FIGURED ON CLEANIN' OUT THE MOUTH OF THE STREAM WHERE SHE EMPTIED INTO THE LAKE... THEN WORKIN' MY WAY UP-STREAM TILL I'D PLAYED THE STRIKE OUT...

LOOK AT THIS NUGGET! MUST BE A FOUR-OUNGER, AT LEAST!



THEN, 'BOUT A MONTH AFTER I'D STARTED WORKIN' MY CLAIM, IT HAPPENED! THIS BIG BURLY-LOOKIN' CRITTER SHOWS UP! I'D PANNED ME 'BOUT FOUR THOUSAND DOLLARS WORTH O' GOLD BY THAT TIME AN' WAS FEELIN' PRETTY GOOD! THAT WAS WHERE I MADE MY *BIG MISTAKE*! I GUESS HE'D BEEN SPYIN' ON ME... AN' I LET HIM GET TOO CLOSE...

HOWDY, STRANGER, WHERE YUH HEADED?

NO PLACE, BUB! IT'S YOU... WHAT'S GOIN'!



HE WHIPS OUT HIS COLT '45' AND FANS IT TWICE BEFORE I KNOW WHAT HAPPENS...

I'M TAKIN' OVER YOUR CLAIM, RIGHT NOW...

WHA...?!



THE TWO RED-HOT LEAD SLUGS CATCH ME IN THE BUT AN' I KEEL OVER! THE PAIN IS SOMETHIN' ANFUL, AN' I'M *BOILIN' MAD*! WHEN HE COMES OVER TO SEE IF I'M DONE FOR, I KICK OUT AT HIM! HIS COLT GOES FLYIN'...

HUH...?

NOBODY... STEALS WHAT'S MINE... YUH ORNERY GOYOTE!



THE GUN LANDS OFF IN THE BRUSH AND THE BURLY GUY DIVES AFTER IT! I SEED MY CHANCE AND, GETTIN' T'MY FEET, HIGH-TAILS IT FOR CAMP...

LORDY, THEM SLUGS'RE BURNIN' IN MY MIDDLE!

BLAST! WHERE'S THAT CURSED IRON? WHY!! COW!!??



I KEEP GOIN', EVEN THOUGH THE PAIN IS KILLIN' ME! BACK O' ME, I HEAR HIM SHOUT WHEN HE SPIES HIS '45'...

WON'T DO YOU NO GOOD TO RUN, STRANGER!

IF I KIN GIT T'MY SHOTGUN...



A SLUG WHISTLES PAST MY EAR AS I TUMBLE INTO CAMP! I GRAB MY SHOTGUN AND THE BOX OF SHELLS, DUCK BEHIND A ROCK, AN' LET GO WITH BOTH BARRELS...

HERE, YOU MURDERIN' SNAKE! NOW, WE'RE EVEN-STEVEN...



THE BURLY CRITTER MUSTA CAUGHT THE SUNLIGHT GLINT ON THE SHOTGUN BARREL. 'CAUSE HE'S BEHIND A TREE WHEN THE BUCKSHOT PEPPERS 'ROUND HIM...

OKAY, STRANGER! I CAN WAIT! LET'S SEE HOW LONG YOU KIN HOLD OUT WITH TWO SLUGS IN YOUR BUT!



SO WE SIT THERE... HIM BEHIND THE BIG OL' PINE, AND ME CROUCHING BEHIND THAT ROCK, BLEEDIN' LIKE A LEAKY WATER BAG...

ONE OF US HAS GOT TO FALL ASLEEP, AN' I AIN'T TIRED!

OH, LORDY... IF HE DON'T GET ME, I'LL BLEED TO DEATH!

I STUFF THE SHOTGUN SHELLS FROM THE BOX INTO MY POCKETS AND SIT BACK TO WAIT! I KNOW I'M GOIN' TO DIE... BUT I AIN'T GONNA LET HIM LIVE EITHER...

YOU'LL NEVER TAKE THIS CLAIM, YUH SNAKE! I'LL GET YUH FIRST! I SWEAR IT!

I'M WAITIN', OL' TIMER!

I GUESS I MUSTA PASSED OUT FROM THE PAIN, 'CAUSE THE NEXT THING I KNOW, MY EYES POP OPEN AND HE'S STANDIN' OVER ME WITH A KNIFE...

THAT'LL TEACH YUH NOT TO FALL ASLEEP!

I'M GRINNIN' AT HIM, AND HE'S STARIN' BACK AT ME! THE KNIFE IS DRIPPIN' BLOOD! I TRY TO GRAB FOR MY GUN, BUT I CAN'T MOVE A MUSCLE! FUNNY, BUT I DON'T FEEL ANY PAIN, EITHER! SO I KNOWS THAT I'M DEAD...

STOP GRINNIN' AT ME, YUH OLD COOT!

BUT I JUST KEEP GRINNIN'! HE SPITS AT ME, AN' GOES AN' GETS MY PICK-AXE AN' SHOVEL...

I'M GONNA BURY YUH, YUH OLD GEEZER! THEN I'M GONNA FINISH WORKIN' YER CLAIM! ONLY NOW, IT'S MY CLAIM!

SO HE STARTS DIGGIN'! THE GROUND IS HARD AND HE CURSES A LOT! I JUST KEEP GRINNIN' AT HIM! HE'S GETTIN' MADDER AND MADDER...

AH, TO HECK WITH IT! THIS IS GOOD ENOUGH!

HE GRABS ME AND DRAGS ME OVER TO THE SHALLOW GRAVE HE'S DUG OUT OF THE ROCKY LOAM! HE KICKS ME IN...

THERE! REST IN PEACE, YUH OLD PRAIRIE-DOG!

SO I ROLL INTO THE GRAVE AND LAND FACE UP STARIN' AT HIM AND GRINNIN' AT HIM! AND HE'S RED AS A BEET, HE'S SO MAD! HE YELLS AT ME AND FLINGS A SHOVEL-FULL OF DIRT INTO MY FACE...

STOP STARIN' AT ME! STOP GRINNIN' AT ME! SHUT YOUR EYES WHEN YER DEAD! CLOSE YER MOUTH!



PURTY SOON I'M ALL COVERED, AN' LAYIN' NICE AN' COZY IN MY GRAVE! I HEAR HIS HOB-NAILED BOOTS CRUNCHIN' AROUND OVER ME AS HE STAMPS THE GROUND DOWN HARD SO'S IT WON'T LOOK FRESH-DUB...

HEH, HEH! YOU WERE *WRONG*, EH, OLD TIMER? I GOT YOU FIRST, AFTER ALL!



I FIGURE I LAY THERE A WEEK OR SO IN THE GROUND! THE CRAWLIN' THINGS START WORKIN' ON ME! I I DON'T FEEL 'EM, BUT I KNOW THEY'RE THERE 'CAUSE I KIN HEAR 'EM SCRATCHIN' ROUND ME! THEN, AFTER A LONG TIME, I HEAR SOMETHIN' UP ABOVE, CLAWIN' AT THE GROUND...



IT'S A WILD CAT DIGGIN' ME UP! IT CLEARS THE SOD OFF'N MY FACE AND SHOULDERS, GRABS MY COLLAR BETWEEN ITS FANGS, AND PULLS ME UP TO A SITTIN' POSITION...



THEN, AFORE IT KIN START RIPPIN' ME TO SHREDS, ANOTHER WILD CAT SHOWS UP...



RIGHT AWAY THEY START SPITTIN' AND HOWLIN' AT EACH OTHER! I SIT THERE, GRINNIN' AT THEM...



THEY SAIL INTO ONE ANOTHER, BUT SOON THE ONE THET DUG ME UP GOES OFF A-SCREECHIN' AND A-NURSIN' HIS WOUNDS! THEN THE LATECOMER WHAT WON COMES OVER, SNIFFS AT ME, AND LOPEs OFF HISSELF! I GUESS I'M TOO FAR GONE TO MAKE GOOD EATIN' ANYMORE...



SO I SIT THERE STARIN' AT MY TENT, LISTENIN' TO THE BURLY GUY'S SNORIN'. HE SLEEPS RIGHT THROUGH THE MELEE...



IN THE MORNIN, HE COMES OUT OF THE TENT! FOR A MINUTE I THINK HIS EYES IS SONNA FLY RIGHT OUTTA HIS HAIR...



GOOD...LORD!

HE COMES OVER TO ME, LOOKIN' A LITTLE GREEN AROUND THE BILLS. HIS MOUTH IS DRIBBLIN' A LITTLE SPITTLE, LIKE HE'S BEEN SUCKIN' ON A BAR O' SOAP...



IT...IT AIN'T NATURAL! LAY DOWN! YOU'RE DEAD!

BUT I JUST SIT THERE GRINNIN' AT HIM! I KIN TELL HE'S GETTIN' SORE 'CAUSE HIS EYES IS REDDENIN' UP! HE HAULS OFF AND KICKS ME IN THE FACE, AND I FLOPS BACKWARDS INTO MY SHALLOW GRAVE...



SO YOU WONT STAY BURIED, EH, YOU BLASTED OLD GEEZER?

HE SCRAMBLES OFF TOWARD THE TENT AN' COMES BACK WITH THE PICK-AXE AN' SHOVEL! HE GRABS HOLD OF ME AND DRAGS ME DOWN T' THE LAKE...



WELL, WE'LL SEE IF YOU'LL STAY IN THE WATER!

HE TIES THE SHOVEL AN' THE PICK-AXE T' MY FEET WITH SOME ROPE...



THIS'LL WEIGHT YOU DOWN SO YOU STAY DEEP!

THEN HE HAULS ME INTO THE LAKE! HE PULLS ME OUT AS DEEP AS HE CAN GO AN' LETS ME SETTLE TO THE BOTTOM! I GRIN AT HIS HOB-NAILED BOOTS AS I HIT...



THE WATER STARTS FILLIN' INTO MY GUTS, AN' GURGLIN' INTO MY LUNGS! SOME NOSEY FISH COME 'ROUND...PEERIN' AT ME! ONE OF 'EM TAKES A NIP AT MY HAND! I SWAY BACK AND FORTH LAZILY...



WHERE THE RUSHIN' STREAM EMPTIES INTO THE LAKE, A CRAZY CURRENT SWIRLS! I'M LAYIN' RIGHT SNACK IN THE MIDDLE OF IT! PRETTY SOON, I'M TURNIN' AND TWISTIN'...AND THE ROPES IS RUBBIN' ON THE SHARP EDGES OF THE SHOVEL...



IT TAKES ABOUT A WEEK FOR THE ROPES TO SAW THROUGH! MEANWHILE THE FISH HAVE BEEN PECKIN' AWAY... AND BY THE TIME I'M OUT FREE, I'M IN PRETTY SAD SHAPE! I'M ALL WATER-LOGGED AND BLOATED, AND THE GASSES THAT HAVE FORMED IN MY INSIDES FORCE ME TO THE SURFACE...



I GUESS THOSE CRAZY CURRENTS MUSTA DRAGGED ME 'ROUND AND 'ROUND, 'CAUSE I POP UP RIGHT AT THE MOUTH OF THE STREAM WHERE BURLY-BOY IS PANNIN'! HE NEARLY FALLS IN THE WATER WHEN HE SPOTS ME...



HE STARTS YELLIN' AND SCREAMIN' AT ME, BUT I JUST STARE AT HIM HIM AND GRIN REAL SILLY-LIKE! ONLY I DON'T LOOK TOO HUMOROUS ANYMORE! FACT IS I SMELL PRETTY BAD TOO! AT LEAST THAT'S WHAT HE COMPLAINS OF AS HE DRAGS ME ASHORE...



HE LUGS ME OVER TO THE CLEARING AND LAYS ME IN THE MIDDLE! THEN HE STARTS DRAGGIN' OVER LOGS HE'S BEEN COLLECTIN'...



I GUESS HE WAS GETTIN' READY TO BUILD HISSELF A CABIN WITH THEM LOGS AND STAY OVER THE WINTER! ANYWAY HE DECIDES TO SACRIFICE 'EM ALL FOR ME! HE TOSSES ME ON THE PILE...



I'M LAYIN' THERE ON THE PILE OF LOGS IN THE MIDDLE O' THE CLEARIN'! ALL AROUND, THE BRUSH IS DRY, 'CAUSE IT'S BEEN A DRY SUMMER! RIGHT AWAY, THE FLAMES ARE LEAPIN' 'ROUND ME...



THERE'S A TERRIFIC BOOM...AND I BLOW UP! THE SHOT-GUN SHELLS I'D PACKED INTO MY POCKETS GO OFF LIKE A DYNAMITE CHARGE! I RIP INTO A THOUSAND PIECES, AND THE EXPANDING GASES AND COMPRESSED STEAM INSIDE ME SENDS THE FLAMIN' HUNKS FLYIN' THROUGH THE AIR...



THE HEAT IS TERRIFIC! OF COURSE, I DON'T FEEL NOTHIN', BUT I CAN HEAR MY WATER-LOGGED BODY A-HISSIN' AND A-POPIN'! I GUESS I BLACKEN UP A BIT, AND THE WATER IN MY ROTTED CLOTHES DRIES OUT! SOON THEY START TO BURN! I KIN SENSE SOMETHIN' STRANGE GOIN' ON INSIDE ME...LIKE I'M EXPANDIN' FROM THE STEAM AND GASES! THEN...



SOME OF ME LANDS ON THE BURLY GUY, AND HE'S SO BUSY PEELIN' ME OFF'N' HMM AND PATTIN' OUT HIS BURNIN' CLOTHES THAT HE DON'T NOTICE I'VE ALSO LANDED ALL AROUND THE EDGE OF THE CLEARIN'... IN THE DRY BRUSH, IN THE TINDER-LIKE PINES, EVERYWHERE.



WHAT A FIRE I START! IN A COUPLE OF MINUTES, THE WHOLE CLEARIN' IS SURROUNDED BY A CIRCLE OF FLAME...A WHITE HOT WALL MOVIN' IN ON THE BURLY CRITTER! HE DON'T STAND A CHANCE O' GETTIN' THROUGH IT! 'TAINT LONG 'TIL HE STARTS SHRIEKIN' IN PAIN...



...BUT AFTER A WHILE IT'S QUIET... 'CEPT FOR THE CRACKLIN' OF THE FIRE AS IT SWEEPS ON THROUGH THE DRY WOODED HILLS! I GUESS I KIN REST EASY NOW! I PLUMB FINISHED MY WORK!

HEH, HEH! YOU PLUMB HAVE, WHITEY! AND IT SHOR WAR A...AHEN...IT SURE WAS A DOOZY OF A TALE, EH, KID-DIES? YOU KNOW, WHEN I FIRST TOLD THIS YARN TO MY IDIOT EDITORS, THEY CONFESSED THAT THEY NEVER KNEW A CORPSE COULD WRITE HIS OWN STORY! I STRAIGHTENED THEM OUT, THOUGH! WHITEY COULDN'T WRITE HIS OWN



NAME! HE DICTATED THE WHOLE THING TO ME! HEH, HEH! A REAL GHOST WRITER, EH? WELL, NOW I'LL TURN YOU OVER TO THE VAULT-KEEPER! I'LL SEE YOU LATER ON!

THE VAULT OF HORROR!

GREETINGS, GORY GRAVE-GHOULS! IT'S ME... THE VAULT-KEEPER... AGAIN! TIME TO GUEST-SPOT THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S MAG ONCE MORE! SO DRAG YOUR BATTERED BODIES INTO THE VAULT AND STRETCH THEM OUT ON THAT CAKE OF ICE OVER THERE! IT'LL KEEP YOU COOL... WHICH IS THE PROPER MOOD FOR THIS CHILLING TALE OF ICE, SNOW, AND HOT LOVE I CALL...

A Hollywood Ending!



HUGH HOWARDS, FAMOUS HOLLYWOOD MOVIE PRODUCER AND CELEBRATED SPORTSMAN AND WORLD TRAVELER, GUIDED HIS PRIVATE TRANSPORT PLANE LOW OVER THE GLARING ICE-FIELDS OF THE FROZEN NORTH...

THERE'S AN ESKIMO SETTLEMENT... DOWN THERE, MR. HOWARDS!

ALL RIGHT, EVANS! TELL THE PUBLICITY BOYS TO FASTEN THEIR SAFETY BELTS! WE'RE GOING IN!



DOWN BELOW THE GLEAMING AIRPLANE, FUR-CLAD FIGURES DARTED FROM THEIR ISLOOS WAVING AND CHATTERING...

THEY SEE US!

THERE'S A LEVEL SPOT EAST OF THE SETTLEMENT! I'M GOING TO BRING 'ER DOWN ON IT!

SOON THE SKY-GIANT'S SKI-RUNNERS TOUCHED THE SURFACE OF THE CHOSEN ICY EXpanse AND CAME TO A STOP! THE OGLING ESKIMO POPULATION CROWDED ABOUT THE PLANE...

WELL! C'MON YOU GUYS! LET'S GET SOME PICTURES AND GET OUT OF HERE!

YES, MR. HOWARDS!

OKAY, SIR!

MR. HOWARDS STEPPED FROM THE PLANE AND ADDRESSED THE GATHERED ARCTIC INHABITANTS...

ANYBODY HERE SPEAK ENGLISH?

I, I SPEAK ENGLISH!

MR. HOWARDS TURNED TO THE FUR-CLAD FIGURE THAT STEPPED FORWARD THROUGH THE CROWD! IT WAS A GIRL...

GOOD! MY NAME IS HOWARDS! HUGH HOWARDS! I'M A HOLLYWOOD PRODUCER! SAY! YOU'RE NOT AN ESKIMO!

NO, MR. HOWARDS! I AM AN AMERICAN!

THE GIRL SMILED AT HUGH! HER EYES SPARKLED! SHE WAS BEAUTIFUL.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN THIS GOD-FORSAKEN PLACE?

I LIVE HERE WITH THESE PEOPLE! THAT WOODEN BUILDING IS MY HOME! MY GUARDIAN BROUGHT ME HERE SIX YEARS AGO!

HUGH STUDIED THE ATTRACTIVE GIRL STANDING BEFORE HIM! HE'D NEVER SEEN A MORE PHOTOGENIC FACE.

YOU SAY YOU LIVE THERE IN THAT SHACK? IS IT HEATED?

WHY, YES! THERE'S AN OIL STOVE IN IT! WHAT MAKES YOU ASK?

HUGH TOOK THE GIRL'S MITTENED HAND AND STARTED TOWARD THE SNOW-LADEN FRAME BUILDING.

C'MON! I WANT TO TAKE A LOOK AT YOUR FIGURE!

MY FIGURE? WELL, REALLY NOW, MR. HOWARDS... I...



LOOK! DON'T GET IN A HUFF! I'M A HOLLYWOOD PRODUCER! THIS IS STRICTLY BUSINESS! IF YOU'VE GOT WHAT IT TAKES, I CAN MAKE A STAR OUT OF YOU!



A... A STAR? WHAT'S THAT?

HUH? HOW LONG DID YOU SAY YOU'VE BEEN UP HERE? SIX YEARS! 'DADDY'... THAT'S MY GUARDIAN. DOCTOR WHEEMS... BROUGHT ME HERE AFTER THE ACCIDENT!



ACCIDENT? YES! MY REAL FATHER AND I WERE IN AN AUTO ACCIDENT! FATHER WAS DOCTOR WHEEMS'S COLLABORATOR! FATHER WAS KILLED! I LOST MY MEMORY. I DON'T EVEN REMEMBER WHAT MY FATHER LOOKED LIKE!



AMNESIA, HUM? I GUESS SO! ANYWAY, 'DADDY' BROUGHT ME HERE! HE HAD TO TEACH ME ALL OVER AGAIN! I'D FORGOTTEN EVERYTHING! I'D EVEN FORGOTTEN HOW TO WALK AND TALK! IT WAS AWFUL! BUT 'DADDY' WAS PATIENT, AND I LEARNED QUICKLY.



THEN YOU REALLY DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT MOVIES OR MOVIE STARS? I'M AFRAID NOT, MR. HOWARDS! BUT LOOK... WE'D BETTER TAKE OFF OUR PARKAS NOW THAT WE'RE INDOORS!



THE GIRL SLIPPED OUT OF HER HOODED PARKA AND PULLED OFF HER FUR PANTS! MUGH QUICKLY FOLLOWED HER EXAMPLE! FINALLY SHE STOOD BEFORE HIM GLAD ONLY IN A SIMPLE SWEATER AND SLACKS...

TERRIFIC! TERRIFIC! WHAT'S YOUR NAME? 'TERRY.' IT'S SHORT FOR THERESA! TERRY ARLEN!



YOU'RE A SWEET KID. HE... HE'D NEVER LET ME GO! HE'S FORBIDDEN ME TO EVER LEAVE THE SETTLEMENT! BUT IF YOU WISH, YOU MAY ASK HIM! HE'S AT THE TRADING POST! HE'LL BE BACK IN TWO DAYS!



TWO DAYS LATER, THE SHINING PRIVATE AIR-TRANSPORT STILL SAT ON THE OPEN ICE-FIELD OUTSIDE THE SETTLEMENT! HUGH HOWARDS **HAD** STAYED. WAITING FOR DOCTOR WHEELS TO RETURN BY DOGSLED FROM THE DISTANT TRADING-POST...

LOOK HERE, EVANS! WHEN IN BLAZES ARE WE LEAVING THIS FRIGID HOLE? IT'S BEEN TWO DAYS! I GOT A WIFE AND KIDS!

SORRY, BOYS! MR HOWARDS HAS BUSINESS HERE!

YEAH! BUSINESS WITH THAT DAME! I SEEN EM TOGETHER!



INDEED THEY HAD BEEN TOGETHER... ALMOST EVERY CHANCE THEY COULD! THERE WAS SOMETHING ABOUT TERRY... SOMETHING HUGH D NEVER FELT ABOUT A GIRL BEFORE...

I'M...IN LOVE WITH YOU, TERRY! I NEED YOU! YOU'VE GOT TO COME BACK TO THE STATES WITH ME! I WANT TO MARRY YOU!

OH, HUGH! DO YOU MEAN IT! I'VE NEVER BEEN IN LOVE BEFORE! HOW CAN I BE SURE?



HUGH CAUGHT TERRY IN HIS ARMS...



OH, HUGH! HUGH!

NOW ARE YOU SURE, TERRY?



SUDDENLY A BLAST OF ICY WIND SWEEPED THROUGH THE ROOM AS THE DOOR WAS FLUNG OPEN...

TAKE YOUR HANDS OFF HER!

HUH? GASP DADDY!



THE FUR-GLAD DOCTOR STAMPED INTO THE ROOM...

GET OUT! LEAVE HER ALONE! GET OUT OF MY HOUSE!

WAIT, DADDY! YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND! HUGH WANTS TO MARRY ME AND TAKE ME TO HOLLYWOOD!

THAT'S RIGHT, SIR!

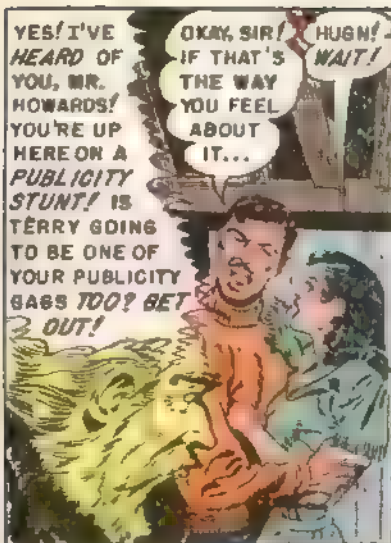


NEVER! I FORBID IT! YOU'RE NOT LEAVING, TERRY! YOU'RE STAYING HERE WITH ME!

BUT, DOCTOR! I LOVE TERRY! I CAN GIVE HER SO MUCH...

HUGH WANTS TO MAKE A MOVIE-STAR OUT OF ME! HE'S A PRODUCER!

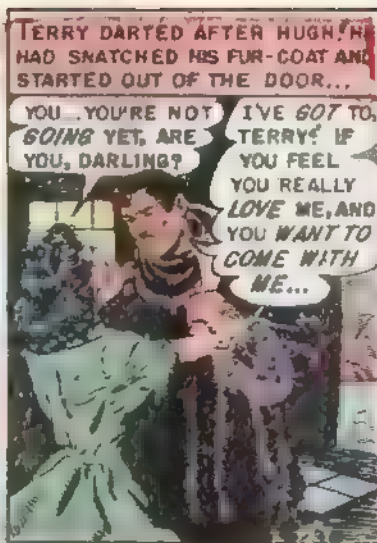




YES! I'VE
HEARD OF
YOU, MR.
HOWARDS!
YOU'RE UP
HERE ON A
PUBLICITY
STUNT! IS
TERRY GOING
TO BE ONE OF
YOUR PUBLICITY
GABS TOO? GET
OUT!

OKAY, SIR!
IF THAT'S
THE WAY
YOU FEEL
ABOUT
IT...

HUGH!
WAIT!



TERRY DARTED AFTER HUGH! HE
HAD SNATCHED HIS FUR-COAT AND
STARTED OUT OF THE DOOR...

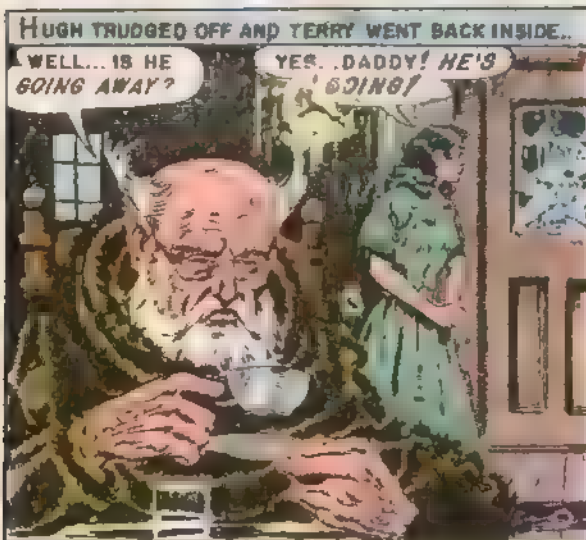
YOU... YOU'RE NOT
GOING YET, ARE
YOU, DARLING?

I'VE GOT TO,
TERRY! IF
YOU FEEL
YOU REALLY
LOVE ME, AND
YOU WANT TO
COME WITH
ME...



...MEET ME AT
THE PLANE IN AN
HOUR!

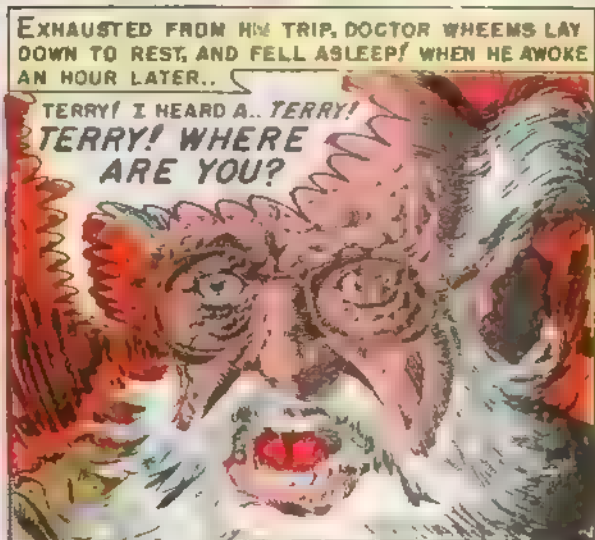
I'LL... I'LL
BE THERE, HUGH!
I'LL BE THERE!



HUGH TRUDGED OFF AND TERRY WENT BACK INSIDE...

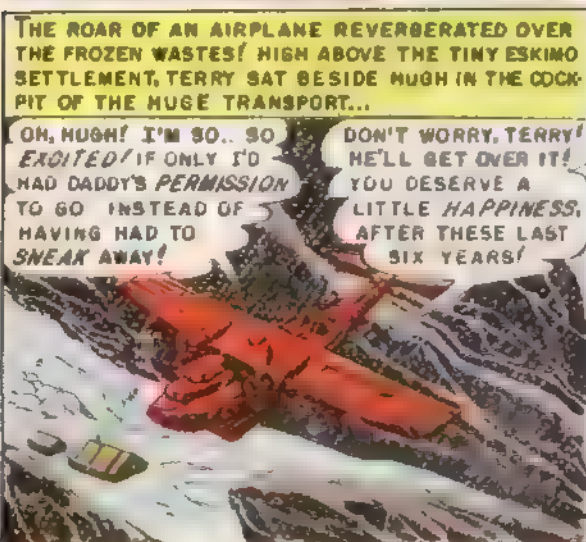
WELL... IS HE
GOING AWAY?

YES... DADDY! HE'S
GOING!



EXHAUSTED FROM HIS TRIP, DOCTOR WHEELS LAY
DOWN TO REST, AND FELL ASLEEP! WHEN HE AWOKE
AN HOUR LATER...

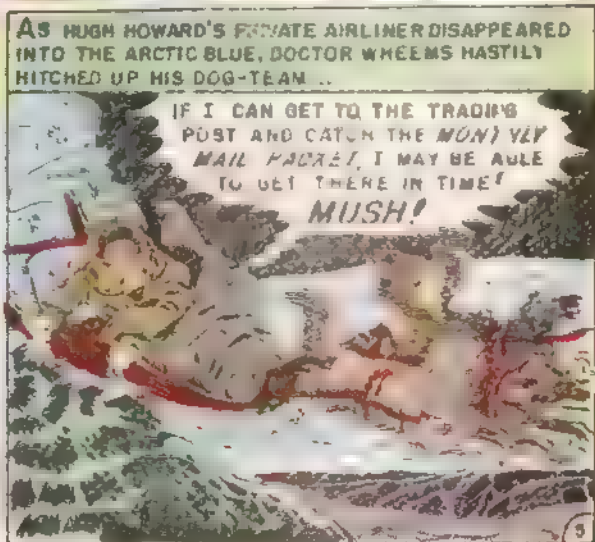
TERRY! I HEARD A... TERRY!
TERRY! WHERE
ARE YOU?



THE ROAR OF AN AIRPLANE REVERBERATED OVER
THE FROZEN WASTES! HIGH ABOVE THE TINY ESKIMO
SETTLEMENT, TERRY SAT BESIDE HUGH IN THE COCK-
PIT OF THE HUGE TRANSPORT...

OH, HUGH! I'M SO... SO
EXCITED! IF ONLY I'D
HAD DADDY'S PERMISSION
TO GO INSTEAD OF
HAVING HAD TO
SNEAK AWAY!

DON'T WORRY, TERRY!
HE'LL GET OVER IT!
YOU DESERVE A
LITTLE HAPPINESS,
AFTER THESE LAST
SIX YEARS!



AS HUGH HOWARD'S PRIVATE AIRLINER DISAPPEARED
INTO THE ARCTIC BLUE, DOCTOR WHEELS HASTILY
HITCHED UP HIS DOG-TEAM...

IF I CAN GET TO THE TRADING
POST AND CATCH THE MONI VLY
MAIL PACKET, I MAY BE ABLE
TO GET THERE IN TIME!
MUSH!

HEH, HEH! SO MUCH SPIRITED
TERRY OUT OF THE COLD-
COUNTRY TO THE LAND OF
PALM TREES AND KLIEG LIGHTS...
HOLLYWOOD! THEY WERE
MARRIED AS SOON AS THEY
ARRIVED, AND THE FILM
COLONY WENT WILD OVER
THE PRODUCER'S NEW BRIDE
AND FUTURE STAR! SCREEN
TESTS WERE MADE, A
SCRIPT WAS CHOSEN, AND
SHOOTING BEGAN...



ALL WENT WELL FOR A FEW
WEEKS! THEN, THE MAKE-UP
MAN CAME TO SEE HUGH...

EET...EET EES
ABOUT YOUR WIFE.
M'SIEU HOWARDS!
SHE EES A LOVELY
WOMAN...BUT HER
SKIN, LATELY...
WELL

SPEAK UP,
MARKEL!
WHAT IS
IT?



I HAF TROUBLE
LATELY, M'SIEU!
SHE IS HAGGARD!
HER SKIN EES DRY
CRACKING! I
CANNOT DO ANY-
THING WEETH
EET!

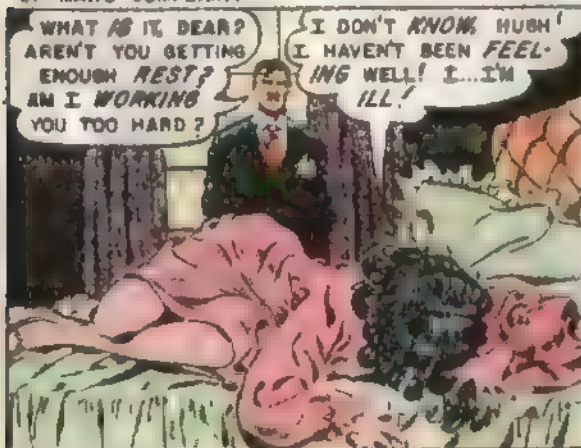
I. I
HADN'T
NOTICED!
I'LL SPEAK
TO HER!



THAT NIGHT, HUGH TOLD TERRY ABOUT THE MAKE-
UP MAN'S COMPLAINT

WHAT IS IT, DEAR?
AREN'T YOU GETTING
ENOUGH REST?
AM I WORKING
YOU TOO HARD?

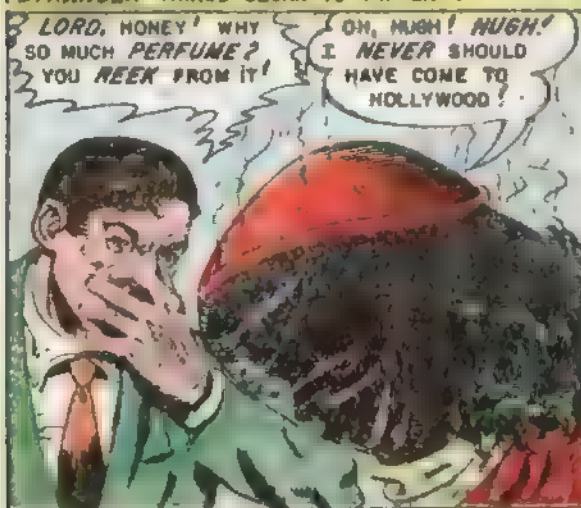
I DON'T KNOW, HUGH!
I HAVEN'T BEEN FEEL-
ING WELL! I...I'M
ILL!



HOWEVER, TERRY DIDN'T GET OVER IT! IN FACT,
STRANGER THINGS BEGAN TO HAPPEN

LORD, MONEY! WHY
SO MUCH PERFUME?
YOU REEK FROM IT!

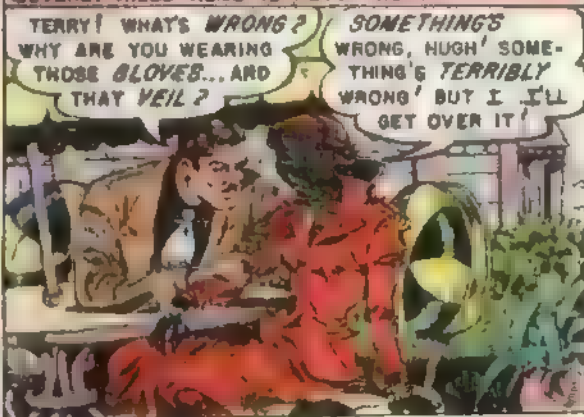
OH, HUGH! HUGH!
I NEVER SHOULD
HAVE COME TO
HOLLYWOOD!



THE NEXT DAY, TERRY DIDN'T SHOW UP AT THE
STUDIO! HUGH RETURNED TO THEIR PALATIAL
BEVERLY HILLS HOME TO FETCH HER.

TERRY! WHAT'S WRONG?
WHY ARE YOU WEARING
THOSE GLOVES...AND
THAT VEIL?

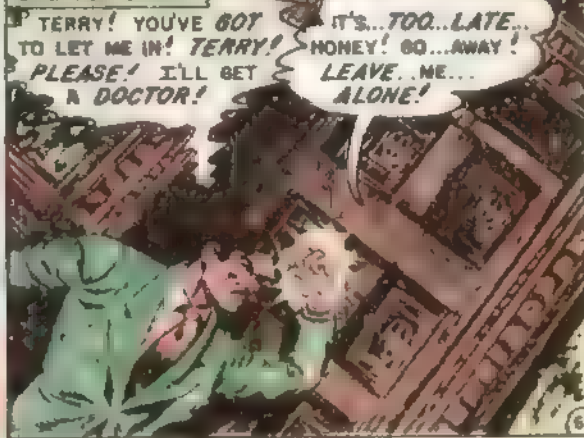
SOMETHING'S
WRONG, HUGH! SOME-
THING'S TERRIBLY
WRONG! BUT I'LL
GET OVER IT!



IN THE DAYS THAT FOLLOWED, TERRY LOCKED
HERSELF IN HER ROOM REFUSING TO COME OUT!
SHE ORDERED HER FOOD SENT UP AND LEFT OUT-
SIDE HER DOOR...

TERRY! YOU'VE GOT
TO LET ME IN! TERRY!
PLEASE! I'LL GET
A DOCTOR!

IT'S...TOO...LATE...
MONEY! SO...AWAY!
LEAVE ME...
ALONE!



AND THEN DOCTOR WHEEMS ARRIVED! HE'D TRAVELED BY DOG-SLED, MAIL-PACKET, TRAIN, AND PLANE TO GET TO THE HOWARDS HOME...

DOCTOR WHEEMS! WHERE IS SHE, HOWARDS? I'VE GOT TO TAKE HER BACK, BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE! YOU NEVER SHOULD HAVE TAKEN HER AWAY!



SHE'S UP IN HER ROOM, DOCTOR! SHE REFUSES TO SEE ANYONE! THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH HER! FIRST MY MAKE-UP MAN COMPLAINED ABOUT HER SKIN... THEN SHE STARTED WEARING GLOVES AND A VEIL! NOW, SHE'S SECLUDED HERSELF! HER VOICE SOUNDED SO STRANGE! TODAY, SHE EVEN REFUSED TO ANSWER ME WHEN I CALLED!



THEN IT... IT IS TOO LATE! TAKE ME TO HER!

WHAT IS IT, DOCTOR? TELL ME! HER FATHER, PROFESSOR ARLEN, AND MYSELF WERE COLLABORATING ON A SCIENTIFIC EXPERIMENT WHEN THE ACCIDENT OCCURRED! WITH HIS DYING BREATH ARLEN BEGGED ME TO TRY OUR NEW PROCESS ON TERRY!



THE ACCIDENT HAPPENED ON THE HIGHWAY JUST OUTSIDE MY LABORATORY! WE'D WORKED WITH MONKEYS, BUT FOUND THAT EVEN THOUGH WE REVIVED THEM AFTER THEY'D BEEN A FEW MINUTES DEAD, THEY CONTINUED TO DECAY! COLD WAS THE ONLY ANSWER! COLD... TO PRESERVE THEM!



YOU REVIVED THEM... AFTER DEATH?

YES, MR. HOWARDS! TERRY ARLEN WAS DEAD! I REVIVED HER! THAT WAS THE EXPERIMENT PROFESSOR ARLEN AND I HAD BEEN WORKING ON! I RUSHED HER TO THAT ARCTIC SETTLEMENT TO KEEP HER FROM DECAYING! I HAD TO TEACH HER EVERYTHING ALL OVER AGAIN! THE REVIVING ACTION REVERTS THE PATIENT TO INFANTHOOD! TERRY HAS ACTUALLY BEEN DEAD FOR OVER SIX YEARS!



GOOD LORD! HERE, DOCTOR! THIS IS HER ROOM!

HOWARDS AND WHEEMS FORCED OPEN TERRY'S DOOR! AS IT SWUNG AJAR, THE FETID RANCID ODOR OF DECAY BURNED THEIR NOSTRILS! TERRY LAY UPON HER BED IN A FLIMSY PINK GOWN! HER FLESH WAS ROTTED UPON HER BONES! HER FACE WAS A GRAY, SKULL-LIKE DEATH-MASK... ITS BARED TEETH SET IN AN IDIOTIC GRIN! A WAVE OF NAUSEA SWEEPED OVER HOWARD AS HE STARED AT THE SHAPELESS PUTRID REMAINS OF HIS ONCE LOVELY WIFE...



COME, MY BOY! WE CAN'T HELP HER NOW!

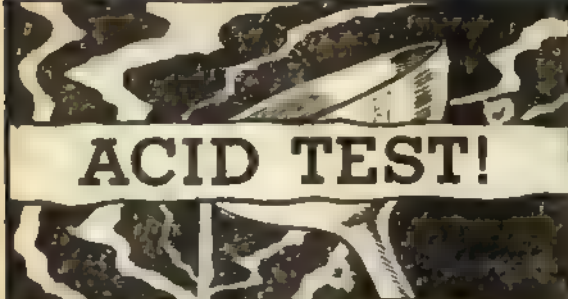
CHOKED

HEH, HEH! SO THAT'S WHY TERRY DOUSED HERSELF WITH PERFUME! AFTER ALL, HOW MUCH CAN A BODY STAND... EVEN A DEAD BODY? POOR HUSBAND! WELL, A COLD WIFE IS BETTER THAN NO WIFE AT ALL... STONE COLD, THAT IS! MAYBE, IF TERRY'D STAYED UP NORTH, SHE'D HAVE LASTED INDEFINITELY, INSTEAD OF ROTTING ON THE MOOF! I'LL BET THOSE HOT KLIEB LIGHTS DIDN'T HELP THE SITUATION, EITHER! OH, WELL! SHE'D PROBABLY HAVE BEEN A ROTTEN ACTRESS ANYWAY! NOW I'LL TURN YOU BACK TO THE CRYPT-KEEPER!

'BYE! SEE YOU NEXT IN MY MAG... THE VAULT OF HORROR!



THE END!



ACID TEST!

"If you think I'm going to divorce you, Homer Wormwood, you're *insane*! I know how much you've come to hate me . . . and the feeling is mutual . . . but you're not getting away from me so easily! I've given up the best years of my life to you and you'll continue to support me *as long as I live!*"

Homer watched his wife disappear into the kitchen, and a weary smile flitted across his face. *Have it your own way, Edna, he thought . . . as long as you live, eh? It may be a good deal less time than you think!*

His fingers shook as he took from his pocket a small bottle marked: CAUTION: SULPHURIC ACID! He glanced furtively toward the kitchen door, then removed the bottle cap and poured the contents of the vial into the drink he had been preparing for Edna. *This was the easiest way out!* Put Edna to the acid test, in a manner of speaking . . . and watch the agony of her fatal failure!

His wife's voice was grating on his ears again, continuing the argument he had purposely begun the moment he had returned from work that night. He wouldn't have to submit much longer to that despicable voice, Homer mused. . . sulphuric was great at bringing peace to people!

It was year six of Homer Wormwood's marital hell, and just the night before he had determined to make this the last year . . . the last month, week and day! He had quietly tried to squirm loose by divorce, but it had resulted only in Edna redoubling her vituperative squalling about his inefficiency as a help-mate, provider and companion. Divorce was totally out of the question, she had screamed at him so often that it had become only a vague rumble in his ears. They were stuck with each

other . . . forever! And Homer had gradually come to realize that Edna liked the state of things . . . thrived on his being trapped for life . . . exulted over her ability to make him cringe and quail before her razor-sharp tongue. And realization that Edna derived enjoyment from these furious tussles, had inspired Homer's plan for freedom. He had begun the fight tonight with the idea of getting her wound up in another of her turbulent tantrums . . . was praying that she would become blind with pent-up rage! So blind that she would gulp down her drink without a moment's hesitation!

"Haven't you got anything to say in your own defense, you miserable fool?" Edna had reentered the room and was standing opposite him, her face flushed with the heat of her own words.

Not another word, Homer cautioned himself. My silence always infuriates her. A couple more minutes of ranting with no answer from me, and she'll grab that drink with unreasoning fury and gulp it down!

Words continued to pour out of Edna like a raging torrent, and Homer stood his ground and looked sheepishly at the carpet. Suddenly, as though exhausted by her own violent clamoring, Edna stopped and picked up the cocktail glass Homer had filled for her. She held it poised in front of her lips:

She's going to drink it now! he thought. *If I keep up this defeated cat act just a moment longer . . .*

"Patihhi!" Edna snorted at that moment. "If there's anything I detest, it's a man who acts like a whipped dog! Maybe *this* will stir you up!" And with that, Edna hunched her drink in Homer's bewildered face.

A blanket of pain seared into his brain. His eyes became orbs of screaming hot agony . . . the stench of his own tortured flesh choked his nostrils. And the last thing Homer Wormwood heard, before a veil of unconsciousness descended upon him, was the wail of his own voice screeching aloud a single word: "ACID . . . ACID . . . ACID . . . !"

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THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S CORNER

Crawl into the old Crypt crumb! Not to be outdone by these other two art lovers, V K and O W, who have been serenading you with miserable morbid music from their reeking record racks. I have recently obtained a collection of folk songs from some dead folks! Listen now while I pound a few places on my pulsating piano! I'll start my mad medley with that old favorite, "On Top of Old Spooky"... wend my weird way through "The Last Ground-up," and for my final offering thrill you with my rollicking rendition of the terror-tune made popular by Cranky Slain: "Ghou, Train!" But while my foul feeble fingers are tickling the ivories, let us discuss more earthy things!

First of all, the votes! Our "Guest-of-the-Issue" vote-counters... **THE FRIENDLY GRAVE-DIGGERS AND MONUMENT CHISELERS (WE WRAP EM, THEN TAG EM) CLAMMING AND SHOP-LIFTING ASSOCIATION OF CHERRYSTONE, MAINE**... have just dug up the backed out results! First place goes to Droolna Jack Davis (MY BOY!), for his bloody **GROUNDS FOR HORROR!** Second niche is taken by Ooang Joe Orlando, for his shocking **ROTTIN' TRICK!** To Ghastly Graham angels go third place honors... for his crawly **SUCKER FOR A SPIDER!** Kreepy Jack Kamen wins fourth spot with his breathtaking **BOARD TO DEATH!** The text, **WEREWOLF**, bows in fifth.

And now a message from my idiot editors! They have instructed me to inform you suckers who have written in that EACH of your letters has been carefully read, and the criticisms as well as compliments swallowed, digested, and in most cases acted upon! They have asked me to sincerely thank all of you who have written! Their only regret is that they find it impossible to answer each and every letter personally, as they would like so much to do! (The above statements constitute a paid political announcement! The opinions expressed in these statements are not necessarily those of your columnist! In fact, I don't give a corpse's capillary if you write or not! Cause I'm sick to life of hiring those ridiculous social and business organizations to count your vicious, vulgar votes!) (Now let's not get **NASTY**, old boy! These readers constitute your **BREAD AND BLOOD!** Their wish is our command!—Ed) So don't any of them wish you two morons should drop dead? (Aw, stop beating your toothless gums and tell 'em about your imitators!—Ed) Oh yeah! As I'm sure you've noticed, there has been a deluge of imitations on the stands making use of key EC title words such as **TERROR, HORROR, FEAR, and WEIRD!** While it's true that EC was the first to use these words... along with **HAUNT, CRYPT, and VAULT**... in the comic mag field, these words cannot be registered! Any old slob can come along and use these words so long as he doesn't use them in the same combinations that EC has used them in its titles! That this has caused much confusion among you newer readers who have yet to learn to recognize an EC mag by its format and artists is tough! The topper came when I was informed that some publisher had put out a book called "Tales of Terror"... the title of our annual! Needless to say, I jumped down my idiot editors' throats and they in turn jumped down the rival publisher's

throat... and the name will be changed! As far as these other titles that come awfully close to EC's are concerned, all I can do is to ask you to open your blood-shot eyes, try and act clever, and look for the EC seal... the covers're plastered with 'em! So get smart, kiddies... wise up! (Aw, shuddup! You're over-doing it!—Editors.) So stop twisting my twisted arm!

And now for some mail... a lotta room there is left for it!

Dear Crypt Keeper,

... I notice that you always use the expression, "kiddies"! This I don't like because although I am only 14 myself I'm sure that many adults read your mag. And I don't think of myself as a "kiddie" either!

Robert Rattne
San Antonio, Texas

Well, old man, when you're as old as I am, even an adult is a "kiddie"! But when I call you "kiddie", it's really a term of endearment... no slight on your age is intended whether you be 5 or 60! But if enough of you "kiddies" write in and complain, I'll cut it out! (In a pig's nostril!)

Dear Crypt-Keeper,

My father is a barber, and now he only has your magazines in the rack in his shop. When the customers read them their hairs stand on end and it makes my old man's job easier!

Eddie Fontana
Jersey City, N.J.

Lazy barbers kindly note!

Dear Crypt-Keeper

The store keeper where I get your mag keeps a copy hidden for me so I'm sure of getting it!

Robert Jester
Greenwood, Dela.

Never can tell when the store might be robbed, hiddo! Why don't you make doubly sure of getting every copy by subscribing... 75c for one year's supply... a nauseating issue!

And sets of pictures of the Three GhouLunatics are still 25c... might as well not wait any longer to order... the price isn't going down... and this offer is limited! It will expire in 1983! And remember... only 125 sets to a customer (each at a quarter, of course! No wholesale prices!)

The address for mail, picture orders, subscriptions, and insults is:

The Crypt-Keeper
Room 704 Dept. 30
225 Lafayette Street
N.Y.C. 12, N.Y.

THIS LITTLE GEM OF BLACK
HORROR IS CALLED...

♪ Auntie, it's
Coal Inside! ♪



TOBY SHOOK HIS SEVEN-YEAR-OLD HEAD ANGRILY! THE VOICE CONTINUED! IT GRATED IN TOBY'S EARS! THIS TIME IT WAS HIGH-PITCHED AND EXCITED! IT WAS ALWAYS DIFFERENT! LAST TIME IT'D BEEN LOW AND SOFT! THE TIME BEFORE THAT, IT'D BEEN LOUD AND GRUFF...

GO ON, TOBY! YOUR AUNT'S NOT HOME NOW! IT'S A GOOD CHANCE! YOU NEED A FEW PIECES ANYWAY! GO AHEAD! GO ON DOWN!

NO! AUNT AGNES FORBID ME! I MUSTN'T! AUNT AGNES SAID...

SHE'LL NEVER KNOW, TOBY! HOW ARE YOU GOING TO BE ABLE TO MARK UP THE SIDEWALK WITHOUT A HUNK OF COAL? JUST ONE PIECE... ONE SMALL PIECE!

GEE, I DO NEED IT BADLY! TODAY'S THE GAME! I GOTTA KEEP SCORE! OKAY! I'LL DO IT! I'LL GO DOWN INTO THE COAL-BIN!



TOBY OPENED THE DOOR IN THE KITCHEN THAT LED TO THE CELLAR AND TIPTOED DOWN THE STEPS. HE HESITATED AT THE BOTTOM, PEERING THROUGH THE GLOOM AT THE BOARD-PARTITION NEXT TO THE FURNACE THAT SECTIONED OFF THE GOAL-BIN FROM THE REST OF THE GELLAR...

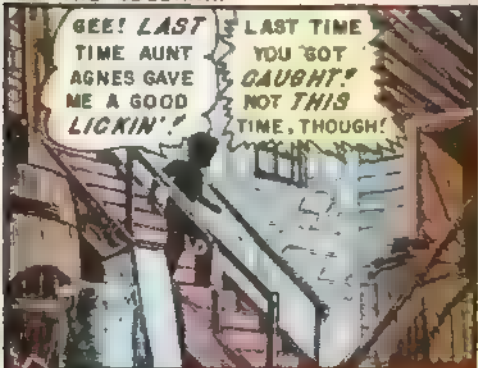
OVERHEAD, A BOARD CREAKED! TOBY STOPPED BESIDE THE GOAL-BIN DOOR, LOOKING UP...

MAYBE... MAYBE IT'S AUNT AGNES!

NOW! SHE COULDN'T HAVE GONE TO THE STORE AND BACK SO FAST!

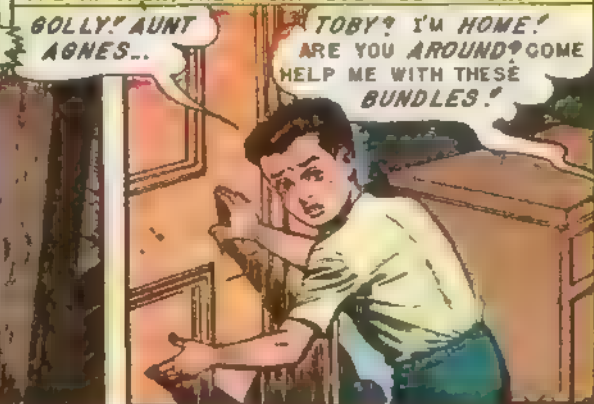
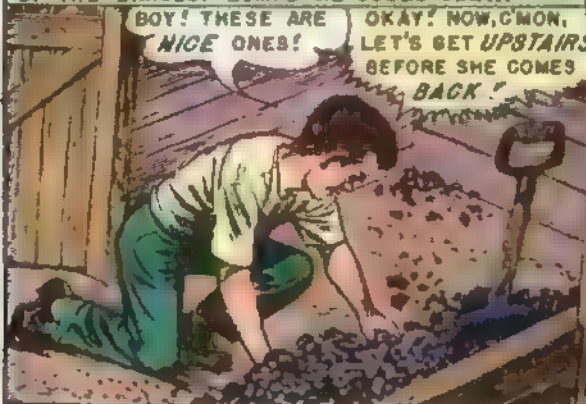
TOBY LISTENED FOR A MOMENT! THERE WAS NO SOUND! HE SWUNG OPEN THE GOAL-BIN DOOR AND STEPPED IN... ONTO THE BLACK DUST-COVERED FLOOR...

GEE! THE GOAL'S ALMOST ALL USED UP! SHE WILL! UPTAUNT AGNES! QUICK! GRAB A FEW PIECES! MORE!



A FAINT LIGHT FILTERED THROUGH THE BLACKENED CELLAR WINDOW HIGH UP IN THE WALL OF THE GOAL BIN! TOBY KNELT AND PICKED UP THREE OF THE LARGEST LUMPS HE COULD SEE...

TOBY WENT OUT OF THE GOAL-BIN... CLOSED THE DOOR BEHIND HIM... AND TIPTOED UPSTAIRS! JUST AS HE CAME THROUGH THE CELLAR DOOR INTO THE KITCHEN, THE FRONT DOOR SLAMMED...



BOY! THESE ARE NICE ONES!

OKAY! NOW, COMON, LET'S GET UPSTAIRS BEFORE SHE COMES BACK!

BOLLY! AUNT AGNES...

TOBY! I'M HOME! ARE YOU AROUND? COME HELP ME WITH THESE BUNDLES!

TOBY'S FIRST URGE WAS TO RUN AWAY... BUT BEFORE HE COULD MAKE A MOVE, HIS AUNT WAS IN THE KITCHEN GLARING DOWN AT HIM...

TOBY EXTENDED TWO BLACKENED, COAL-DUST COVERED HANDS! HIS AUNT GASPED! HER FACE GREW PURPLE WITH RAGE!



TOBY! DIDN'T YOU HEAR ME CALL YOU TO HELP ME WITH THESE BUNDLES?

I. I'M SORRY AUNT AGNES! HERE! GIVE ME ONE!

TOBY! YOU'VE BEEN IN THE GOAL-BIN AGAIN!

HUH? WHO... ME?

AUNT AGNES SLAMMED THE BUNDLES DOWN ON THE KITCHEN TABLE.

LOOK AT YOU! YOU'RE FILTHY! I TOLD YOU WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF YOU WENT DOWN THERE AGAIN!

GEE, AUNT AGNES! I NEEDED A PIECE TO KEEP SCORE! THERE'S A GAME THIS AFTERNOON! THE VOICE REMINDED ME!

ARE YOU GOING TO START TELLING ME ABOUT THAT STUPID VOICE YOU KEEP HEARING? YOU'RE JUST LIKE YOUR FATHER... A GOOD-FOR-NOTHING LIAR!

I'M NOT A LIAR! I HEAR A VOICE! HONEST! IT TALKS TO ME... IT MAKES ME DO THINGS!

LIAR! LIAR! YOU'RE JUST BAD. THAT'S ALL! NO GOOD... LIKE YOUR FATHER! OH, I WARNED MY SISTER NOT TO MARRY HIM!

STOP IT! STOP TALKING LIKE THAT! MY DADDY WAS WONDERFUL!

HAH! HE WAS A WORTHLESS DRUNKARD! IF IT WASN'T FOR HIM, YOUR MOTHER'D BE ALIVE TODAY!

HE WASN'T A DRUNKARD! HE WASN'T!

NO? HOW DO YOU THINK HE AND YOUR MOTHER WERE KILLED? HE WAS DEAD-DRUNK WHEN HE DROVE HOME THAT NIGHT!

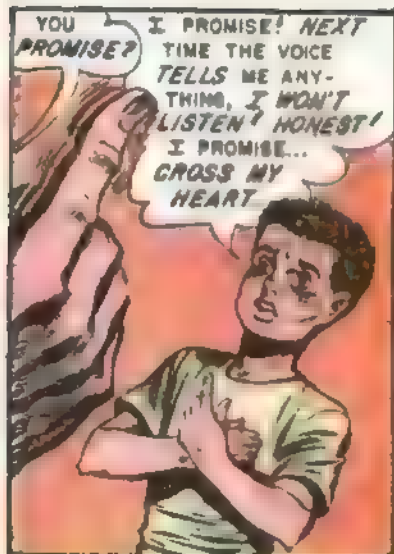
NO! I HATE YOU! I HATE YOU!

HE USED TO HEAR VOICES, TOO! VOICES. HAH! THEY WERE THE D.T.'S! HE CAUSED N' THING BUT TROUBLE FOR ALL OF US! LOOK AT ME! NOW, I'M STUCK WITH YOU!

THE VOICE SAYS YOU HATE ME THAT'S WHY YOU'RE ALWAYS YELLING AT ME!

I YELL AT YOU BECAUSE YOU'RE BAD! NOW YOU LISTEN TO ME, YOUNG MAN! THE NEXT TIME YOU GO DOWN INTO THAT COAL-BIN, I'LL SEND YOU AWAY.. TO THE ORPHAN HOME!

NO, AUNTIE AGNES! (SOB) PLEASE DON'T SEND ME AWAY! PLEASE! I'LL BE GOOD! I'LL BE GOOD!



YOU PROMISE?

I PROMISE! NEXT TIME THE VOICE TELLS ME ANYTHING, I WON'T LISTEN! HONEST! I PROMISE... CROSS MY HEART



ALL RIGHT! NOW, GO TO YOUR ROOM! YOU'LL SPEND THE REST OF THE AFTER-NOON INDOORS! YOU'VE GOT TO BE PUNISHED FOR DISOBEYING ME!

Y..YES, AUNTIE AGNES!

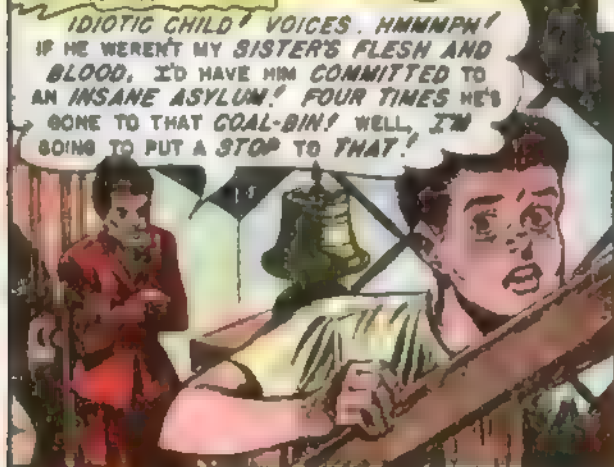


TOBY STARTED OFF! HIS AUNT EXPLODED.

TOBY! LOOK WHAT YOU'RE DOING TO THE FLOOR! YOUR SHOES ARE COVERED WITH GOAL-DUST! TAKE THEM OFF..

YES AUNTIE AGNES!

TOBY UNLACED HIS SHOES AND TROTTED OFF! HIS AUNT BLARED AT HIM



IDIOTIC CHILD! VOICES. HMMMPH! IF HE WEREN'T MY SISTER'S FLESH AND BLOOD, I'D HAVE HIM COMMITTED TO AN INSANE ASYLUM! FOUR TIMES HE'S GONE TO THAT GOAL-BIN! WELL, I'M GOING TO PUT A STOP TO THAT!

AUNT AGNES THUMBED THROUGH THE PHONE BOOK, FOUND WHAT SHE WAS LOOKING FOR, AND DIALED A NUMBER ..



HELLO? IS THIS AMOS KINSTER, THE LOCKSMITH? OH, GOOD! I HAVE A JOB FOR YOU, MR. KINSTER! I WANT YOU TO INSTALL A LOCK...ON MY GOAL-BIN!

MEANWHILE UPSTAIRS TOBY WAS HAVING HIS TROUBLES



C'MON, TOBY! IT'S ALMOST TIME FOR THE GAME! THE KIDS ARE WAITING FOR YOU! BESIDES, YOU'VE GOT TO KEEP SCORE! THE GOAL...IT'S IN YOUR POCKET!

GO AWAY! I'M NOT GOING TO LISTEN TO YOU!

THE VOICE WAS GENTLE THIS TIME PLEADING! IT REMINDED TOBY OF HIS MOTHER'S VOICE AT LEAST THE LITTLE THAT HE COULD REMEMBER



IT'S EASY, TOBY! JUST CLIMB DOWN THE TRELLIS OUTSIDE YOUR WINDOW! HERE, I'LL GO FIRST! YOU FOLLOW!

NO! YOU'RE ONLY TRYING TO GET ME INTO TROUBLE!

THE VOICE WAS OUTSIDE THE WINDOW NOW! IT DRIFTED BACK TO TOBY FROM HALF-WAY DOWN TO THE GROUND...

O'MON! IT'S EASY! IT LOOKS EASY!



TOBY SLIPPED ONE FOOT OVER THE WINDOW SILL... THEN THE OTHER! HE STARTED DOWN THE TRELLIS! SUDDENLY A TRUCK PULLED UP BEFORE THE HOUSE

GOLLY! A TRUCK! THE DRIVER SEES ME!

HEY, KID! YOU'LL GET HURT!



TOBY DROPPED TO THE GROUND AS AUNT AGNES EXPLODED THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR...

I'M THE LOCKSMITH, MA'AM! I SAW HIM AS I DROVE UP.

TOBY! GET IN THE HOUSE! I'LL TAKE CARE OF YOU LATER!



TOBY SCRAMBLED INTO THE HOUSE AND UP TO HIS ROOM! AUNT AGNES TOOK THE LOCKSMITH INTO THE CELLAR...

OKAY, MA'AM! I GOT YUH! YOU WANT A LOCK ON 'ER SO THE KID CAN'T OPEN IT, EN? ONE THAT OPENS WITH A KEY.

THAT'S IT! AND... OH, DEAR! I'D BETTER ORDER SOME MORE COAL!



WHILE THE LOCKSMITH BUSIED HIMSELF ON THE COAL BIN DOOR, AUNT AGNES PHONED THE COAL COMPANY...

THAT'S A LOT OF COAL FOR ONE DELIVERY, MAAM!

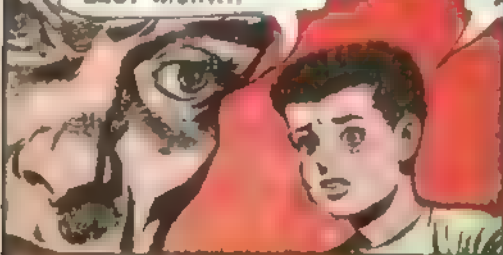
I SAID FOUR TONS, AND THAT'S WHAT I WANT! WE HAVE A BIG COAL BIN! I ALWAYS ORDER FOUR TONS AT A TIME!



OF COURSE, TOBY WAS PUNISHED FOR SNEAKING OUT OF THE WINDOW, BUT HE PROMISED ONCE MORE THAT HE'D IGNORE THE VOICE FROM THEN ON! THE NEXT DAY...

NOW YOU'RE TO STAY IN YOUR ROOM WHILE I'M AT THE STORE! IF THE COAL SHOULD COME, JUST TELL THEM TO PUT IT IN THROUGH THE CELLAR WINDOW! AND DON'T FORGET WHAT YOU PROMISED LAST NIGHT...

DON'T WORRY, AUNTIE AGNES! I'M NEVER GOING TO LISTEN TO THE VOICE AGAIN!



A LITTLE LATER, TOBY LOOKED UP FROM HIS TOYS! SOMEONE WAS CALLING HIM

TOBY! TOBY, HELP ME! COME DOWNSTAIRS PLEASE!

HUH? WHY IT'S AUNT AGNES CALLING ME!



IS.. IS THAT
YOU, AUNTIE
AGNES?

YES, TOBY! COME
DOWN! PLEASE!
LET ME OUT OF
THE COAL-BIN!

**THE
COAL-
BIN?**

YES! THE DOOR LOCKED
SHUT ON ME! I CAME
IN TO SEE IF THE WIN-
DOW WAS OPEN SO THEY
COULD DELIVER THE
COAL! HURRY! THEY'LL
BE HERE ANY MINUTE!

AW, NO! I
KNOW YOU!
YOU'RE NOT
GOING TO GET
ME INTO
ANYMORE
TROUBLE!

TOBY! FOR HEAVEN'S
SAKE! COME DOWN
HERE AND LET
ME OUT! THE
KEY IS IN THE
LOCK! JUST TURN
IT! PLEASE!
—QUICKLY!

I PROMISED I
WOULDN'T LISTEN
TO YOU ANYMORE...
AND I *WON'T!*
YOU JUST *SOUND*
LIKE AUNT E
AGNES! *YESTERDAY*
YOU TRIED TO SAY
LIKE MY MOMMY

TOBY! I AM
YOUR AUNTIE
AGNES! PLEASE
COME DOWN!
PLEASE!

WAS MY DADDY
A DRUNKARD.
AUNTIE AGNES?

NO, TOBY! YOUR
DADDY WAS A
GOOD MAN!
NOW.. PLEASE
COME DOWN.

SEE! YOU'RE NOT
MY AUNTIE AGNES!
MY AUNTIE AGNES
ALWAYS SAID
DADDY WAS A
DRUNKARD!

TOBY! TOB..
GOOD
LORD! THE
WINDOW'S
OPENING!

THE SWIRL SCREAMS OF DELIGHT FROM THE CHILDREN DANCING AROUND THE COAL TRUCK AND THE DEAFENING POAR AS THE BLACK FUEL CASCADED DOWN THE TIN SLIDE DROWNED OUT AUNT AGNES'S SHREKS OF TERROR! LITTLE BY LITTLE, THE HYDRAULIC-LIFTS RAISED THE TRUCK-BODY UNTIL FOUR TONS OF COAL HAD POURED INTO THE COAL-BIN BEYOND THE TINY CELLAR WINDOW! FOUR TONS ENOUGH TO CRUSH THE STRONGEST LEAN-N-HIDE-A-FRAIL BITTER JO-JO AND

NOW DOESN'T THAT STORY LEAVE YOU WITH A LUMP IN YOUR THROAT? HEH, HEH! IT DID OLD AGNES! IN FACT THEY FOUND ONE IN HER THROAT, AND TWO MORE IN HER MOUTH WHEN THEY FINALLY DUG HER OUT! LUMPS OF COAL, THAT IS! AS FOR TOBY WELL, HE DOESN'T HEAR VOICES ANYMORE! NOW, IT'S A SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA! THEY SAY THE KIDS GOT A GREAT FUTURE WHEN THE MUSIC TO THOSE SINGING COMMERCIALS! HOW CAN A SEVEN-YEAR-OLD WRITE MUSIC TO A SINGING COMMERCIAL? COME, COME, NOW! DON'T TELL ME YOU NEVER HEARD ONE! HEH, HEH! BUT

IF THEY HAVEN'T DRIVEN
YOU OUT OF YOUR MIND,
MY 5X7 ACTUAL PHOTO
WILL READ MY COLUMN,
THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S
CORNER. FOR ALL THE
INFO!

THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

HEE, HEE! SO I GOTTA WIND UP THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S MAD-MAG AGAIN, EH? YOU KNOW WHY THEY GIVE ME THIS SPOT? 'CAUSE I'M THE MOST HORRIBLE! DON'T WORRY! MY IDIOT EDITORS KNOW A BAD THING! YEP! 'T'S THE OLD WITCH, MISTRESS OF THE HAUNT OF FEAR! THE FIRE IS LIT UNDER MY YOU-KNOW-WHAT, AND I'M READY TO DISH OUT ANOTHER OF MY PUTRID-PORTIONS OF PULSATING PLEASANTRIES! THIS LITTLE LADLE OF LURID LOATHSOMENESS WILL DEFINITELY WHET YOUR APPETITE! I CALL IT... UGH...

**MOURNIN',
AMBROSE...**



ANDREW DEMERT PUSHED OPEN THE HUGE IRON GATE OF HIS UNCLE'S VAST ESTATE AND MOVED UP THE TREE-LINED ROAD TOWARD THE PALACIAL HOUSE THAT LOOMED UP BEFORE HIM IN THE SEMI-DARKNESS...

SO THIS IS HAWLEY MANOR? I KNEW THAT UNCLE AMBROSE WAS WEALTHY, BUT I NEVER EXPECTED THIS! I WONDER WHY THEY'VE BECOME RECLUSES... HE AND AUNT ELSA! OH, WELL! I'LL GET ALL THE DOPE EVENTUALLY...



ANDREW STEPPED ONTO THE PORTICO OF THE IMPRESSIVE MANSION AND LIFTED THE HEAVY BRASS KNOCKER THAT ADORNED THE MASSIVE OAK FRONT-DOOR! THE HOLLOW BOOM ECHOED AND RE-ECHOED WITHIN.

AS THE DIN OF THE DOOR-KNOCKER DIED AWAY, SLOW FOOTSTEPS APPROACHED! THE HUGE DOOR SWUNG OPEN AND A WIZENED WRINKLED FACE PEERED OUT.

THE OLD MAN'S AGED FACE LIT UP AND A GRIN SPREAD ACROSS IT! HE STEPPED BACK PERMITTING ANDREW TO ENTER.

UGH! THIS PLACE GIVES ME THE CREEPS! HOW ANYONE COULD STAY HERE FOR THREE YEARS WITHOUT LEAVING IT BEATS ME!

Y YES?

ARE YOU MY UNCLE AMBROSE? AMBROSE HAWLEY?

THAT'S ME! COME IN! YOU MUST BE ANDREW. MY WIFE'S SISTER'S BOY!

THAT'S RIGHT, SIR! I'VE BEEN SO ANXIOUS TO MEET YOU AND AUNT ELSA...

THE OLD MAN CLOSED THE DOOR AND LOOKED AROUND NERVOUSLY! THEN HE MOVED CLOSE TO ANDREW.

DON'T...DON'T BE TOO DISAPPOINTED WITH AUNT ELSA, M'BOY! SHE SHE ISN'T WELL!

OH! I'M SORRY TO HEAR IT! WHAT'S WRONG?

THE OLD MAN CONTINUED TO PEER FROM SIDE TO SIDE! THEN, HE TAPPED HIS TEMPLE.

SHE...SHE'S NOT WELL...HERE! EVER SINCE THE FIRST DEATH...

THE FIRST DEATH?

OF COURSE! YOU COULDN'T HAVE KNOWN! IT HAPPENED THREE YEARS AGO! ONE OF YOUR DISTANT COUSINS CAME TO STAY WITH US! LOVELY WOMAN! SHE...SHE DIED... IN HER SLEEP!

NO! I...I DIDN'T KNOW! BUT YOU SAID THAT WAS THE FIRST! WERE THERE OTHERS?

TWO OTHERS! MY AGED BROTHER CAME TO STAY WITH US ABOUT TWO YEARS AGO! HE...HE WAS OLDER THAN I! HE PASSED AWAY ABOUT A MONTH LATER! THEN MY WIFE'S NIECE CAME! IT WAS TRAGIC! SUCH A YOUNG GIRL...

YOU YOU'D BETTER TELL ME ABOUT AUNT ELSA, UNCLE! IS THERE SOMETHING I SHOULD KNOW?



HER NIECE'S DEATH WAS THE LAST STRAW! SHE TOOK THE FIRST TWO HARD, BUT THE LAST... WELL... SOMETHING JUST SNAPPED!

YOU MEAN SHE'S CRAZY?



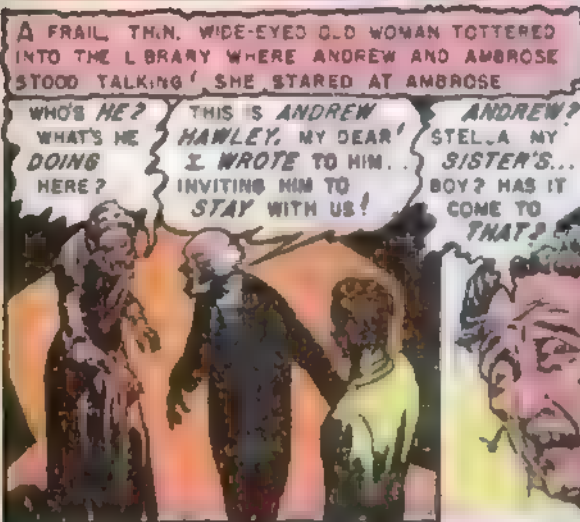
SH-H-H! SHE'LL HEAR YOU! NO! NOT EXACTLY! SHE... SHE'S JUST A LITTLE OVER-DRAMATIC... EMOTIONAL... YOU KNOW! SUPER-SENSITIVE! SHE TENDS TO EXAGGERATE!

I I SEE!



HEM, HEM! JUST HUMOR HER. ANDREW! SHE DOESN'T MEAN ANY HARM!

I I WILL, UNCLE! AMBROSE! WHO WAS IT?



A FRAIL, THIN, WIDE-EYED OLD WOMAN TOTTERED INTO THE LIBRARY WHERE ANDREW AND AMBROSE STOOD TALKING! SHE STARED AT AMBROSE

WHO'S HE? WHAT'S HE DOING HERE?

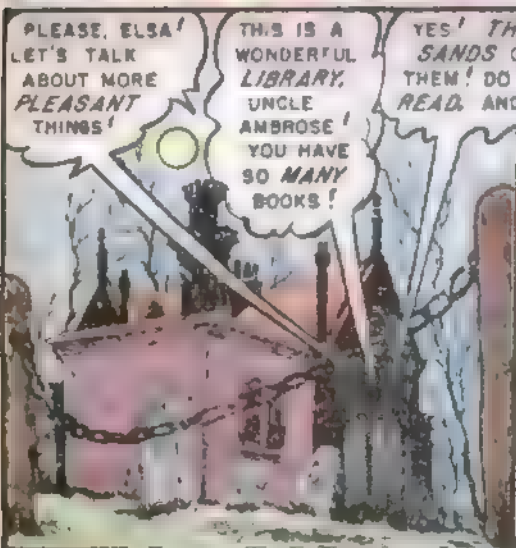
THIS IS ANDREW HAWLEY, MY DEAR! I WROTE TO HIM, INVITING HIM TO STAY WITH US!

ANDREW? STELLA MY SISTER'S... BOY? HAS IT COME TO THAT?

I I DON'T UNDERSTAND. UNCLE AMBROSE? WHAT DOES SHE MEAN?

NOTHING, MY BOY! NOTHING! YOU SEE YOU ARE OUR ONLY LIVING HEIR, NOW!

THE OTHERS ARE DEAD! ALL DEAD! THREE OF THEM ARE OUT THERE... IN THE MAUSOLEUM!



PLEASE, ELSA! LET'S TALK ABOUT MORE PLEASANT THINGS!

THIS IS A WONDERFUL LIBRARY, UNCLE AMBROSE! YOU HAVE SO MANY BOOKS!

YES! THOUSANDS OF THEM! DO YOU READ, ANDREW?

A LITTLE, AUNT ELSA! A LITTLE...

EVEN READ 'MACBETH'. ANDREW? WHERE IT SAYS 'MURDER WILL OUT'!

ELSA! COME, ANDREW! I WILL SHOW YOU YOUR ROOM!



ELSA STARED AT ANDREW, AS HE PASSED HER AND FOLLOWED AMBROSE UP THE MARBLE STAIRS TO THE SECOND FLOOR! THEY STOPPED BEFORE A DOOR AT THE END OF A LONG HALL.

I HOPE YOU WILL BE COMFORTABLE IN HERE, ANDREW!

I'M SURE I WILL BE, UNCLE AMBROSE!

ANDREW'S BEDROOM WAS LARGE AND LAVISHLY FURNISHED WITH EXPENSIVE ANTIQUES! A STONE FIRE-PLACE COVERED ONE WALL OF THE ROOM! ANDREW TOUCHED A MATCH TO THE WOOD PILED ON THE ANDIRONS, AND SOON THE FIRE'S CHEERY GLOW DANCED ACROSS THE FLOOR! SUDDENLY...

WHO...WHO'S THERE?

IT'S ME, ANDREW! YOUR AUNT ELSA!

THE OLD WOMAN STARED AT ANDREW FROM THE PARTLY OPENED DOOR...

OH! COME IN, AUNT ELSA! SIT DOWN!

I I'VE COME TO WARN YOU, ANDREW!

WARN ME, AUNT ELSA?

GET OUT, ANDREW! GET OUT OF THIS HOUSE AND NEVER COME BACK! HE'S A FIEND... A HORRIBLE FIEND!

YOU MEAN UNCLE AMBROSE?

YES! I MUSTN'T LET IT HAPPEN AGAIN! IT'S HORRIBLE... HORRIBLE! HE... HE'S A...

ELSA!

AMBROSE STOOD FRAMED IN THE DOORWAY, HIS WRINKLED FACE PURPLE WITH ANGER! HE SNARLED AT THE OLD WOMAN

ELSA! GET TO BED...THIS MINUTE!

Y-YES, AMBROSE! I I'M GOING!

THE OLD WOMAN LOOKED AT ANDREW, HER EYES PLEADING, AS SHE SHUFFLED OFF

REMEMBER, ANDREW! MURDER WILL OUT!

HURRY ON YES, AUNT ELSA!

GOD-NIGHT, ANDREW! COME, MY DEAR!

THE NEXT MORNING ANDREW WAS AWAKENED BY A FRANTIC POUNDING ON HIS BEDROOM DOOR...

ANDREW! WAKE UP! QUICKLY! IT'S... IT'S AUNT ELSA! SHE...

HUH? WHA? JUST A MINUTE, UNCLE AMBROSE!

WHAT IS IT, SIE? WHAT'S HAPPENED?

ELSA! SHE... SOB... SOB... SHE'S DEAD!



HEE, HEE! THE PLOT SICKENS, EH, KIDDIES? WELL, THE DOG CAME AND PRONOUNCED OLD ELSA DEAD OF NATURAL CAUSES! ANDREW'S UNCLE WAS PRETTY BROKEN UP OVER ELSA'S DEATH! THE FUNERAL WAS DIGNIFIED AND SHORT! THEY CARRIED THE OLD GAL OUT TO THE FAMILY MAUSOLEUM... AND THAT WAS THAT...

ONE EVENING, A FEW DAYS AFTER ELSA'S ENTOMBMENT...

WHAT'S THAT? LOOKS LIKE A FIGURE DOWN THERE... GOING TOWARD THE MAUSOLEUM! WHY, IT'S UNCLE AMBROSE! AND HE'S CARRYING FLOWERS!

EVENING AFTER EVENING, AMBROSE WOULD LEAVE THE HOUSE AND GO DOWN TO THE FAMILY MAUSOLEUM TO SPEND SOME TIME WITH HIS DEAR DEPARTED ELSA...

POOR OLD GUY! HE REALLY MISSES HER!



THEN, ONE EVENING, ANDREW WAS BROWSEING AROUND THE LIBRARY LOOKING FOR SOMETHING TO READ! A TITLE CAUGHT HIS EYE! 'MACBETH'! HE COULD ALMOST HEAR AUNT ELSA'S VOICE...

EVER READ 'MACBETH', ANDREW? WHERE IT SAYS... 'MURDER WILL OUT'?

ANDREW REACHED UP AND PULLED DOWN THE BOOK! HE OPENED IT...

WHY... WHY THIS ISN'T 'MACBETH' AT ALL! IT'S A DIARY! AUNT ELSA'S DIARY!



HEE, HEE! YEP! THERE IT WAS! HIDDEN BETWEEN THE LEATHER-BOUND COVERS OF 'MACBETH'! AUNT ELSA'S DIARY! ANDREW READ IT! EVERY PAGE! ELSA'S WORDS WERE VAGUE... BUT SOME ENTRIES MADE SENSE...

...AND THIS ONE, INSPECTOR! LISTEN! 'I KNOW NOW HOW HE MURDERED THEM! SUFFOCATION! HE DOPED THEM SO THEY COULDN'T RESIST... THEN SMOTHERED THEM WITH A PILLOW! BUT, WHY? WHY?'

...AND THIS ONE! 'NOW I KNOW WHY! IT MUST NEVER HAPPEN AGAIN! I MUST NOT LET IT!' AND THE LAST ENTRY! 'ANDREW HAS COME! HE WILL BE NEXT! I MUST WARN HIM! THE FIEND WILL DO TO HIM WHAT HE HAS DONE TO THE OTHERS! IF AMBROSE WERE TO FIND OUT THAT I MEAN TO TELL ANDREW EVERYTHING, HE WOULD KILL ME!'



HMM! AND YOU SAY AMBROSE CAME IN THAT NIGHT AND INTERRUPTED ELSA? JUST AS SHE WAS ABOUT TO TELL YOU SOMETHING?

THAT'S RIGHT, SIR! BUT ONE THING PUZZLES ME! IF AMBROSE MURDERED ELSA, WHY DOES HE MOURN HER?



IF HE MURDERED HER? WHY THE DOC FELT IT WAS A NATURAL DEATH!

SUFFOCATION LOOKS LIKE A NATURAL DEATH!

THE ONLY WAY TO PROVE THIS ONE WAY OR THE OTHER, MR. DEMERT, IS TO GET PERMISSION TO EXHUME THE BODY AND PERFORM AN AUTOPSY!



PROMISING NOT TO REVEAL THAT ANDREW HAD TIPPED THEM OFF, TWO DETECTIVES CAME TO SEE AMBROSE HAWLEY...

EXHUME MY LATE WIFE'S BODY? PERFORM AN AUTOPSY ON HER? NEVER! NEVER!

IF YOU REFUSE, MR. HAWLEY, WE CAN GET A COURT ORDER GIVING US PERMISSION TO DO IT OVER YOUR OBJECTIONS!



AMBROSE'S AGED BODY SHOOK AS HE SOBBED! A TEAR TRICKLED DOWN HIS WIZENED CHEEK...

PLEASE! YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO DISTURB HER! SHE'S BEEN LAID TO REST! LEAVE HER... I BEG YOU! SOB... SOB... LEAVE HER BE!

LET'S GO RIGHT, CHIEF!



THE TWO DETECTIVES LEFT THE SOBBING OLD MAN! ANDREW STOPPED THEM AT THE DOOR...



WHAT HAPPENED? HE KEPT YOUR EYE ON HIM, DEMERT!

LATER THAT EVENING, ANDREW WATCHED FROM HIS WINDOW AS OLD AMBROSE CROSSED THE GARDEN TO THE FAMILY MAUSOLEUM...

I... I'D BETTER FOLLOW HIM THIS TIME! HE MIGHT TRY TO HIDE THE BODY!



AFTER THE OLD MAN ENTERED THE CRYPT, ANDREW WENT DOWNSTAIRS AND ACROSS THE GARDEN! THE DOOR TO THE MAUSOLEUM WAS PARTLY OPEN! ANDREW PEELED IN



GO! D LORD!

A WAVE OF NAUSEA AND REVULSION SWEEPED OVER ANDREW! HE TURNED AWAY FROM THE HORRIBLE SIGHT AND RAN TOWARD THE HOUSE! FINALLY, HE COULD NO FURTHER! HE DUCKED BEHIND A TREE AND...

DEMERT? THAT YOU? WHAT'S WRONG? HE'S SICK, KELLY! WHERE'S YOUR UNCLE, DEMERT?

CHOKED IN... THE... CRYPT...



THE DETECTIVES HURRIED TO THE MAUSOLEUM AND FLUNG THE DOOR OPEN! AMBROSE HAWLEY SPUN AROUND FROM THE PARTIALLY EATEN CORPSE OF HIS LATE WIFE AND STARED WIDE-EYED, HIS FROTHY MOUTH DROOLING, AT THE INTRUDERS...



GASP! YOU WERE RIGHT, INSPECTOR! HE... HE IS A SHOUL!

THEY DRAGGED THE SHRIEKING, CLAWING OLD MAN FROM HIS VICTIM AND TOOK HIM AWAY! LATER THEY RETURNED TO THE CRYPT AND EXAMINED THE OTHER COFFINS...

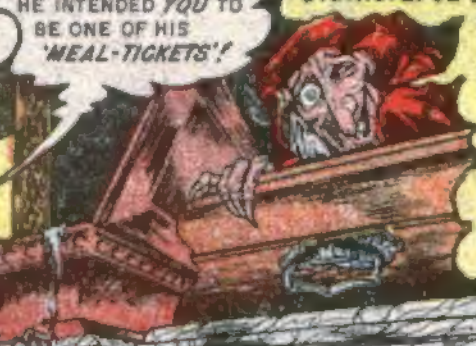
YOU SEE, DEMERT! WHEN WE FOUND OUT FROM THE UNDERTAKER IN TOWN THAT HAWLEY REFUSED TO ALLOW HIM TO ENBALM THE BODIES, WE KNEW SOMETHING WAS WRONG! THE OTHER CORPSES HAVE BEEN STRIPPED OF THEIR FLESH, TOO!

THAT'S WHY HE INVITED YOU HERE... TO HAWLEY MANOR! LIKE THE OTHERS, HE INTENDED YOU TO BE ONE OF HIS 'MEAL-TICKETS'!



HEE, HEE! LUCKY THEY CAUGHT UP WITH OLD AMBROSE WHEN THEY DID! HE WAS RUNNING OUT OF RELATIVES! THANKS TO OLD ELSA, WHO WAS FED UP WITH THE WHOLE AFFAIR, ANDREW WAS SAVED FROM A VERY DISTASTEFUL EXPERIENCE! AND IF YOU'D LIKE TO BE SAVED FROM A DISTASTEFUL EXPERIENCE, DON'T

SEND FOR MY PHOTO! THE METHOD FOR OBTAINING IT CAN BE FOUND IN THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S CORNER... FOR YOU FIENDS WHO LIKE THAT SORT OF STUFF! WE'LL ALL SEE YOU NEXT IN THE VAULT OF HORROR! TILL THEN, SHOUL-BYE... AND UNPLEASANT DREAMS?



IN ALL THY WAYS ACKNOWLEDGE HIM



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